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S E C R E T VIENNA 000707

SIPDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR BROWN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/07/2015

TAGS: PREL OVIP AU

SUBJECT: ATTENDING AUSTRIA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
ON MAY 15

Classified By: Ambassador W.L. Lyons Brown. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) The following message is for the Secretary from Ambassador Brown.

¶2. (S) Begin text:

Dear Madam Secretary:

Foreign Minister Plassnik has invited you and your Russian, British, and French counterparts to Vienna for the May 15 commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Austrian State Treaty. I know you have a very busy spring travel schedule, but I would like explain why this event is a unique chance to advance the President's European agenda. It is also the single best opportunity to engage with the Austrians before they assume the EU presidency in January 2006.

Your visit to this country would reinforce the President's message that the U.S. values the broad transatlantic relationship and supports a strong and active Europe that includes the non-aligned, smaller countries. The State Treaty was a triumph of U.S. diplomacy. The commemoration will be an unmistakable reminder of the enduring American commitment to a free, democratic, and peaceful Europe.

May would also be an excellent time for you to meet Austria's leaders. They are hard at work developing their presidency themes and goals. Meetings with Chancellor Schuessel and Foreign Minister Plassnik would set the stage for effective and close U.S.-Austria cooperation next year. I know the Chancellor and Foreign Minister would deeply appreciate the chance to meet with you early on.

There are substantive topics to discuss in these meetings. Austria's engagement in the Balkans, its support for reform in eastern Europe, its disappointing contributions in Afghanistan, and its negligible role in Iraq are important issues. The most sensitive issue, however, is Austria's expanding relationship with Iran. In the past six months, Embassy Vienna prevented the establishment of an Iranian Technical Cooperation office in Austria and derailed transfers of lethal weapons to Iran. We expect more such initiatives as the Schuessel government reacts to business pressure. Our successful interventions show the Austrians can be responsive. But they need to hear our concerns straight from the top. Your visit -- which would be the first bilateral visit by a Secretary in almost seven years -- would have a positive and perhaps decisive impact on the thinking of Austria's leadership.

I hope you will agree to accept the invitation.

Sincerely, W.L. Lyons Brown
Brown